

Courier Mail

CM iPad section Sport Front Page

Hot shot Smith's a son of a gun

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REAL PROUD: Newly crowned Oceania under-21 gold medallist Matt Smith and his father Alan.

Pic: Jeff Camden

Source: The Courier-Mail

FIRST-TIME rivals stare at Matt Smith as if he's brandishing a wooden tennis racquet when he first arrives on the range with a 31-year-old rifle to compete next to their space-age aluminium or carbon-fibre models.

Those looks dissolve as soon as the newly crowned Oceania under-21 gold medallist starts racking up the bullseyes that have him excitedly dreaming of the 2018 Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast.

He is a son of a gun in the purest sense.

Remarkably, the Year 10 student at Redlands College is taking aim with the same Anschutz target rifle that father Alan relied on to win back-to-back gold medals in smallbore at the 1982 and 1986 Commonwealth Games.

"No one shoots timber any more. This rifle was lying idle in its case for probably 10 years until Matt decided 10 months ago he wanted to move into this discipline," proud father Alan said yesterday.

"The normal life of a competition rifle is 10 years. This one's been going since 1980 and is as good as any."

It's found a perfect fit in new hands because young Smith has already caught the bug for 2018 when shooting will be held on his home range at Belmont in Brisbane.

Victorian teenager Alethea Sedgman won gold in smallbore at last year's Commonwealth Games in Delhi at 16 to show what youthful ambition can do in shooting.

"I want to go all the way," young Smith, 16, said. "Knowing that you have full control of mind and body and being able to centre everything so you shoot 10 after 10 is something I haven't found in any other sport. There's nothing else like it."

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